

Message Text

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PAGE 01 WELLIN 03856 250538Z
ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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R 250501Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5957
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
AMEMBASSY SUVA
CNO WASHDC
CINCPAC HONOLULU
SECDEF WASHDC
JCS WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
CINCPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI
COMSUBPAC PEARL HARBOR HI
COMSEVENTHFLT
COMNAVINTCOM ALEX VA
CTF SEVEN FOUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 03856

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD AND ICA ADVISER

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MNUC, TN, WS, US
SUBJECT: USS BAINBRIDGE VISIT TO TONGA

REF: (A) WELLINGTON 02504, (B) USS BAINBRIDGE DTG
- 222335Z JULY 1978

1. THE NUCLEAR-POWERED CRUISER USS BAINBRIDGE DEPARTED
TONGA ON JULY 24 AFTER A VERY SUCCESSFUL THREE-DAY VISIT
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WHICH NOTABLY ADVANCED OUR EFFORTS TO OPEN PACIFIC
ISLAND PORTS TO U.S. NUCLEAR POWERED WARSHIPS (NPW) AND
ADDED NUMBER 48 TO THE GLOBAL LIST OF COUNTRIES OR
TERRITORIES WHICH HAVE WELCOMED SUCH VISITS.

2. THE BAINBRIDGE VISIT WAS THE CULMINATION OF
SOME TWO YEARS OF SPADEWORK FOLLOWING THE 1976 ROTORUA

MEETING OF PACIFIC FORUM STATES. THAT MEETING EFFECTIVELY BURIED THE SOUTH PACIFIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREE ZONE (SPNWFZ) PROPOSAL OF THE FORMER NEW ZEALAND LABOUR GOVERNMENT AND LEFT THE DOOR OPEN FOR ISLAND GOVERNMENTS TO DECIDE INDEPENDENTLY WHETHER TO PERMIT ACCESS BY U.S. NPW'S. OUR RATIONALE FOR MOVING AT THIS TIME ON THE TONGA VISIT IS SPELLED OUT IN REFTEL (A). ESSENTIALLY, THE VISIT WAS INTENDED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA ON NPW VISITS AND TO FORESTALL AN EXPECTED EFFORT BY NEW ZEALAND'S LABOUR PARTY, SHOULD IT BE SUCCESSFUL IN THE NOVEMBER 1978 ELECTIONS, TO CLOSE PORTS IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC TO NPW'S AND TO RESURRECT THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREE ZONE PROPOSAL. THE SUCCESSFUL VISIT BY THE BAINBRIDGE MARKS PROGRESS TOWARD THAT GOAL.

3. THOUGH THE TURN-DOWN OF A VISIT BY THE BAINBRIDGE TO WESTERN SAMOA WAS DISAPPOINTING, IT WAS NOT UNEXPECTED (SEE REFTEL A). ADDRESSEES WILL RECALL THAT TUPUOLA STATED THAT HE HAD NO DIFFICULTIES WITH THE SAFETY AND LIABILITY ASPECTS OF AN NPW VISIT, BUT THAT SUCH A VISIT DID PRESENT DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS. WE WERE SUBSEQUENTLY TOLD BY TERRENCE GOGGIN, THE ACTING SECRETARY TO THE WESTERN SAMOAN GOVERNMENT, THAT HE IS CONFIDENT THAT PRIMIN TUPUOLA EFI WILL CONSENT TO AN NPW VISIT AFTER THE NATIONAL ELECTION THERE IN
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FEBRUARY 1979. WE HOPE THAT THE NAVY WILL KEEP THIS IN MIND IN SCHEDULING NPW MOVEMENTS.
SELDEN

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